

Questions and Answers:

Request for Proposals from Indian Tribes for Competitive Grants under Clean Water Act Section 319 in FY 2006 (CFDA 66.460 – Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants; Funding Opportunity Number EPA-OW-OWOW-0602)

The RFP for competitive Section 319 grants in FY 2006 states that:

“EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal/application, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions must be submitted before February 15, 2006 in writing to the appropriate EPA Regional Tribal NPS Coordinator and written responses will be posted on EPA’s website at: www.epa.gov/owow/nps/tribal.html.”

The following questions and answers are in response to the above RFP:

Question #1:

Can we jointly apply for a competitive 319 grant with another Tribe if we share a watershed plan? Or do you permit only one competitive grant for each Tribe?

Answer #1:

A Tribe cannot jointly apply for a competitive NPS grant with another Tribe. A NPS grant can only be awarded to a single Tribe or to an Intertribal consortium. However, a Tribe and its Tribal partner(s) can submit proposals for competitive funds separately for different portions of the same project. The Tribes must keep in mind that the proposals will be considered separately in accordance with the selection criteria (evaluation factors) in the final FY 2006 CWA Section 319 Tribal guidelines. Under this scenario, it could be possible that one Tribe may be selected to receive an award and the other Tribe would not. It is also possible that if one Tribe applies and receives a NPS grant, the Tribe may have the option to make a sub-grant to the partnering Tribe.

Question #2:

Can a competitive 319 grant cover multiple years (if it is within the scope of your work plan)?

Answer #2:

Yes. The maximum project and budget period for a NPS grant is 5 years.

Question #3:

Is there a page limit on the grant work plan? If there is no limit, could you give me a general idea of how long the work plans have been in the past?

Answer #3:

No. There is no page limit in the guidelines. In the past, the competitive work plans have averaged about 15-20 pages.

Question #4:

A Tribe wants to include the 319 funding into a PPG. But the language in the guidelines (Section B, III, 2, page 2537) suggests that unless the specific work plan for the competitive funding is already included in the PPG work plan, we shouldn't apply for the 319 competitive grant as part of the PPG. How do I reconcile this issue?

Answer #4:

If the competitive grant is awarded, and the Tribe wants to include it in a PPG, then the competitive work plan needs to be included into the PPG (in order to assure that the awarded project will be implemented).

Question #5:

Can the competitive funding be used for on-the-ground studies (assessment activities) if it will provide information directly related to the development of a watershed-based plan?

Answer#5:

While competitive funds are primarily for implementation activities, EPA allows a portion (up to 20%) to be used for the development of a watershed-based plan. If the funds are being used for this purpose, the guidelines indicate that the activities need to be related to the development of the entire plan (not only assessment activities). So while a portion of the 20% may be used for limited assessments that are in direct relation to developing a specific element of a watershed-based plan (e.g., identification of the causes and sources of NPS pollution), the funding also needs to be clearly linked to developing the watershed-based plan in its entirety. In addition, the guidelines indicated that if a work plan includes a plan to develop a watershed-based plan, it must clearly identify the geographic coverage of the watershed; include a specific schedule for developing the watershed-based plan; and clearly identify the estimated funds that will be used to develop the watershed-based plan (not to exceed 20% of the overall competitive grant).

Question #6:

If 20% of the competitive funds are used for developing a watershed-based plan, must the final work product (for this grant cycle) be a complete watershed-based plan?

Answer #6:

This will depend on the individual circumstances. While there needs to be a clear commitment and schedule for developing the plan (as indicated above), it is possible that this may occur over more than one year, for example, if the recipient is also using other funding sources to help develop the plan (which may be acquired during a different funding cycle).